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ALLAH AND HIS ATTRIBUTES PART I

Knowing Allah Most High

[1] We have two primary sources to understand Allah Most High:

- i. Through revelation and what Allah (swt) has mentioned within these sources (i.e. the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*) about His various attributes.
- ii. Pondering over the creation of the heavens and the earth

[2] Allah (swt) has various attributes which are different from human attributes.

[3] All of the attributes of Allah are pre-eternal and are associated with Him from eternity. He did not develop His attributes later and will remain as they are. It will not go through change, increase or decrease.

[4] The difference between Allah's qualities and any quality that we have, is that our qualities will be temporary. They will start and end somewhere. In between, they will go through some kind of change.

[5] We don't know how the attributes of Allah (swt) function together. For example, we know He used His knowledge, power and will to bring us into existence, but we don't know how these attributes work together. We just know He has attributes and we are the effect of those attributes.

[6] We have a *tarteeb* (order) in the way our attributes function – like thinking before speaking.

[7] Affirmative attributes are separate qualities that exists with Allah (swt).

[8] Negating attributes are attributes which we use to define Allah (swt) which negate from Him a quality that is not possible for Him.

The Difference between an Attribute and Essence

[1] A *sifat* (attribute) is that which is separate from the intrinsic self of a person. For example, knowledge is not an intrinsically human composition but it is a trait, characteristic and attribute. However, we can't say this for the spirit (*ruh*) which is what the fundamental human is composed of. Just like you can't have a human being without body, you can't have a human being without a soul - that is the essence and essential composition of a human. However, attributes are separate and acquired.

[2] Sight, power, hearing and speech – are all attributes of a person, but you can still have a human being without these attributes (some people can't speak for example).

Existence (wujud)

[1] Existence can't be negated in any way, shape or form. This is known as an absolutely essential attribute (*sifat al-nafsiyyah*).

[2] The difference between our existence and His existence, is that our existence is temporary. We came into existence and will lose this existence at some point.

[3] Allah's existence is eternal. There was never a time when Allah (swt) did not exist.

[4] His attributes have been exactly the way it has been from eternity and will remain like that. None of His attributes will develop later, will become weak, change, have a shortcoming, be enhanced or altered.

[5] There are three types of Existence:

- i. **Possible** - Everything that is possibly existent comes under the jurisdiction of Allah's *qudrah* (power) – which is basically everything. Not just the things existence but its qualities, size, dimensions and everything attributed to it. We are possibly existent; we are not necessarily existent for this world to run neither are we inconceivable objects.
- ii. **Necessary** - The only thing necessary are Allah (swt) and His attributes.
- iii. **Impossible** - These are things that don't come under the jurisdiction of power. For example, if someone was asked to build a square triangle, it will be inconceivable. Some scholars explain that Allah (swt) can do everything as long as it does not reduce Him from being God.

Beginningless Eternality (qidam)

[1] Allah (swt) is without beginning.

[2] If Allah (swt) was in need of being created, it would mean He would not be fully independent, autonomous and powerful.

[3] **Proof:** We know this from His name "**Al-Awwal**" (The First).

[4] **Proof:** If He had a beginning, He would have had to be created by something. If He had to be created, then something else would have had to exist before him to create Him which would mean that He could not be the First and there is a time in history where He didn't exist.

[5] The Prophet (saw) said, "**There was Allah and there was nothing other than Him**" (Bukhari).

Endless Eternality (baqa')

[1] This means to endure forever.

[2] **Proof:** We know this from His name, "**Al-Akhir**" (The Last).

[3] Allah (swt) has no end; He will never wither away and expire in any way shape or form. He will remain perfect forever.

[4] **Proof:** If He didn't come into existence from before and was always there, then anything that is pre-eternal and has always been there would always remain there because they will never fit in time and can't end.

[5] Allah (swt) says, **"Everyone on earth perishes, all that remains is the Face of your Lord"** (Qur'an 55:27).

Absolute Differentiation From That Which is Created

[1] Allah (swt) is absolutely dissimilar from anything in existence.

[2] He is beyond anything you describe Him to be.

[3] He doesn't have an ingredient or composition that has any similarity.

[4] He is not a body, flesh or any other composition; He isn't composed of parts or limbs; He doesn't need eyes to see, ears to hear; He is not a substance, or build-up of atoms; time nor place can encompass Him; He is not in any direction.

[5] Allah (swt) says, **"There is nothing like Him"** (Qur'an 42:11). The literal translation of this verse is that there is nothing *like* the like of Him and there is nobody parallel to Him in likeness.

[6] Allah (swt) says, **"And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him"** (Qur'an 112:4).

[7] Allah (swt) says, **"Your Lord, the Lord of Glory, is far above what they attribute to Him"** (Qur'an 37:180).

His Self-Subsistence by Himself

[1] Allah (swt) is totally independent and self-reliant whereas everyone else is reliant.

[2] *Ghina* means self-enriched.

[3] Allah (swt) says, **"People, it is you who stand in need of Allah – Allah needs nothing and is worthy of all praise"** (Qur'an 35:15).

Oneness (wahdaniyyah)

[1] Allah (swt) is 'One' – not two, three, four. He is just one entity.

[2] Oneness means there is nothing similar to Him.

[3] Oneness also means He is unique. There is no essence or entity like Him or has the qualities like Him.

[4] Oneness also negates anybody has the ability to do the same acts as Allah (swt).

[5] Allah (swt) says **“Your god is the one God: There is no god except Him”** (Qur’an 2:163).

[6] Allah (swt) says **“Say, ‘He is Allah the One”** (Qur’an 112:1).